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15 We claim:-

1. A process for the preparation of polyurethane foams having improved long-term stability by reacting
  - 20 a) polyisocyanates with
  - b) compounds having at least two hydrogen atoms reactive with isocyanate groups, in the presence of inhibitors in an amount of from 0.1 to 20% by weight, based on the

25 weight of the polyurethane,

wherein the inhibitors are embedded in a substance which is inert under the conditions of the polyurethane preparation.

- 30 2. A process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the inhibitors are embedded in a wax.
3. A process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the inert substances have a melting point such that they melt during the reaction
- 35 35 which results in the polyurethane.
4. A process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the inert substances have a heat of fusion of from 50 to 250 joules/gram.
- 40 5. A process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the melting point of the inert substances is from 20 to 150°C.
6. A process as claimed in claim 2, wherein the wax contains one or more polar groups.

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7. A process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the inhibitors are selected from the group consisting of  $\alpha,\beta$ -unsaturated compounds, carboxylic acids, carboxylic acid derivatives, ketones or aldehydes, lactones, lactams and/or cyclic ethers, 5 esters, sulfonic acids, cyclic sulfonic esters and/or sulfones, salts of metals of subgroups I, II and/or VIII and organic cyclic compounds, inorganic or organic acids and acid derivatives which can liberate acids in a hydrolysis process.
- 10 8. A process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the encapsulated inhibitors are present in particulate form.
9. A process as claimed in claim 8, wherein the particles have a median particle diameter of from 20 to 800  $\mu\text{m}$ .
- 15 10. A polyurethane which can be prepared by a process as claimed in any of claims 1 to 9.

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Preparation of polyurethane foams having improved long-term stability

5 Abstract

Polyurethane foams having improved long-term stability are prepared by reacting

10 a) polyisocyanates with

b) compounds having at least two hydrogen atoms reactive with isocyanate groups, in the presence of inhibitors,

15 by a process in which the inhibitors are encapsulated in a substance which is inert under the conditions of the polyurethane preparation, in particular wax.

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